

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 19 and 21-25 are pending in this application. 18, 20 and 26-44 are canceled.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 19, 21-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Benetti (U.S. Patent No. 5,894,843) and further rejected claims 7-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being nonpatentably obvious over Benetti. The Examiner correctly points out that "Applicant's earliest priority dates back to the divisional filed on January 19, 2000", and that the "claimed subject matter is not disclosed in the CIP 08/281891 and the CIP 08/023778." While the claimed subject matter was not disclosed in the earliest priority applications, it was disclosed in related applications filed between the cited CIPs and this application's parent. Applicants failed, however, to claim priority within the prescribed time period under 37 C.F.R. § 1.78 to the applications filed between CIP 08/281891 and the parent application, U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/487,024. As a result, Benetti, which was filed prior to the parent application, but after applications that this application should have claimed priority, is currently considered prior art against the current application.

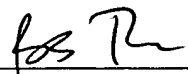
To correct this oversight, Applicants have filed a Petition to Accept an Unintentionally Delayed Claim of Priority on this date, a copy of which is attached. The correct priority is listed above as an amendment to the specification. Once the Petition Branch acts on the attached Petition, Benetti will no longer be citable as prior art as this application properly claims priority to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/486,941, filed June 7, 1995 (now U.S. Patent No. 5,799,661), which discloses the claimed subject matter and is prior to Benetti (filed February 20, 1996). At that point, Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and allow the pending claims.

Applicants submit an Information Disclosure Statement for the Examiner's attention.

In the event that it becomes necessary to charge additional extension fees or any additional charge, Applicants hereby grant the Commissioner permission to charge the Deposit Account No. 10-0750/HRT279/BST.

If the Examiner believes that a discussion of the pending claims would expedite the prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: January 12, 2004